

SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES  
HOSTED BY  
U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE BYRON CUDMORE

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Judge Cudmore uses a mediation format, and private caucusing with each side. Judge Cudmore may address your client directly during the settlement conference. Parties with ultimate settlement authority should be personally present, or with leave of Court may be immediately available by telephone. Whenever an insurance company or carrier is a party or is defending a party, a representative of the insurance carrier with settlement authority must be present.

Judge Cudmore mandates that in all settlement conferences that he hosts, counsel and *pro se* parties must submit detailed settlement statements seven (7) days prior to the settlement conference. Settlement statements will be treated confidentially by Judge Cudmore and should not be filed with the U.S. District Court and must not be submitted to the other parties or other counsel of record.

Each settlement statement should candidly assess the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of the case, including an appraisal of the issues of liability. Each side should specify the evidence that supports their theory or defense of the case. Plaintiff's counsel shall also itemize all damages claimed and the prospect for recovery on each item of damages claimed. Counsel should attach to their statements any documents that might enhance the productivity of the negotiations. The parties should also provide the Court with any controlling legal precedent that supports their theory or defense of the case.

The parties are expected to have engaged in good faith settlement discussions before requesting a settlement conference with Judge Cudmore. The settlement statement must describe negotiations that have occurred to date, detailing demands, offers, and any counter-offers that have been made and rejected. The settlement statement should also describe any offers that are currently open for acceptance. The settlement statement should identify any particular circumstances which appear to have impeded efforts thus far to resolve the case.

When a settlement is successfully mediated, and the parties request the District Court to retain jurisdiction to enforce compliance with the settlement contract pursuant to Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Ins. Co of America, 511 U.S. 375 (1994), Judge Cudmore suggests the parties formally consent to him pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 636(c) prior to a dismissal of the case to enable Judge Cudmore to enforce the terms of the settlement agreement.